

DRAFT

Strengthening Seattle's Future:

The 2004-2005 Seattle City Council Agenda

As the legislative branch of Seattle city government, the City Council has many and varied responsibilities to work with the executive branch to serve Seattle citizens and keep the City strong. Within these broad duties, the Council must identify serious challenges and new opportunities that warrant special attention over the next two years.

Identifying these priorities in a Legislative Agenda provides the City Council the means to target our resources and schedule to make certain critical actions are taken when needed. This agenda is a tool to judge Council performance, and assists the executive branch by signaling areas where there is mutual interest or where different approaches must be reconciled. Finally, this draft agenda gives citizens the opportunity to comment on and shape the Council's intentions.

Citizen comments and ideas are encouraged, especially at six public meetings hosted by Council members between February 3 and February 18. The Council will meet on February 19 to discuss citizen responses and review and ratify the 2004-2005 Seattle City Council Agenda.

These draft priorities developed by the City Council and Council staff on January 30 will provide the starting point for the discussion at each of the six community meetings:

DRAFT

DRAFT

Priority #1: Pass a 2005-2006 Budget that maintains core services and that is financially sustainable through efficiencies and possible new revenue sources.

- Reduce City health care costs through expansion of prevention/wellness strategies and through exploring securing lower cost Canadian prescriptions for employees, City retirees, and citizens served by the Seattle-King County Public Health Department.
- Seek additional budget savings. Request departments to identify management efficiencies by June 1.
- Facilitate earlier Council involvement and authority in the budget process.
- Arrange for feasibility review by Office of Policy Management of such revenue sources as development impact fees and a head tax on non-residents working in Seattle and utilizing City services.
- Explore options to propose ballot measure(s) beyond the state 1% property tax increase cap to cover costs of critical City functions.

Priority #2: Strengthen Seattle's intergovernmental relationships with local, regional, tribal, state, and federal governments to develop the partnerships needed to successfully advance regional common interests.

- Participate proactively in regional initiatives by selecting forums of special interest and involving the Council as a whole in preparing for such intergovernmental decision-making.
- Identify new formal and informal outreach steps to build stronger relationships with regional partners.
- Create a Council policy document which outlines the Council's position in such regional policy areas as growth management, infrastructure, environmental protection, and human services, and the relationship between each. (This would be similar to the Council's approach in defining positions on state legislation.)

DRAFT

DRAFT

Priority #3: Help citizens get from place to place by expanding transportation choices, making certain all transportation providers work together, and increasing services in areas of the City that are seeking or experiencing residential or commercial growth.

- Implement strategy to finance maintaining and improving the City's transportation system.
- Conduct a major public engagement initiative to select a strategy for the Viaduct, seawall and waterfront and begin implementation.
- Advocate for the City and neighborhoods with the Seattle Monorail Project and Sound Transit and ensure these projects move forward: select the appropriate Northern link alignment; ensure appropriate mitigation in transit-way agreements; and make certain diverse modes of transportation are properly linked.
- Increase pedestrian and bicycle mobility and improve sidewalks through legislation, regulatory changes and budget prioritization.
- Expand efforts to secure additional transportation funding from State and Federal governments.
- Develop and integrate transportation strategies for such neighborhoods undergoing major change and development as South Lake Union, Northgate, Ballard, Center City, University District and Rainier Valley.

Priority #4: Commit to preserving and strengthening the social fabric of our City by identifying and providing services to those who need them.

- Support renewal of the Families and Education Levy and target a variety of means to increase pre-kindergarten learning and development.
- Devise incentives and regulatory changes to encourage the private development of affordable housing.
- Strengthen and improve the City's response to domestic violence.
- Improve police-community relations.
- Join in the multiple strategies of the regional public/non-profit coalition to end homelessness.
- Improve the City's inventory of social services provided, and review how these services match demand in the community.
- Establish benchmarks and standards for service providers.

DRAFT

DRAFT

Priority #5: Promote and enhance public dialogue, debate and meaningful participation in government.

- Create opportunities for expanding knowledge and information sharing on City and Council activities through Seattle STAT-style presentation of performance statistics and service information on the City's website; increased use of opinion columns in newspapers by council members and preparation of special reports; better ties to Neighborhood Service Centers; interactive video technology; improved explanations of Council processes; and increased language translation.
- Increase access options for citizens by developing a Council call-in radio show or Seattle Channel program; expand community meetings held outside of City Hall; strengthen relations with Community Councils; and provide increased time for public comment and involvement in Council meetings.
- Provide new interactive forums for public participation in City Council decision-making, such as brown bag luncheons; increased use of web-based dialogues; and development of key issue forums using panels, experts or debates on selected topics.

Priority #6: Increase living wage jobs citywide, and especially in distressed neighborhoods, through workforce investment, business development and improvement in the physical infrastructure.

- Identify currently distressed neighborhoods and target the additional tools and resources they require.
- Expand contracting opportunities for woman and minority-owned enterprises either by developing new programs within the constraints of I-200 or securing changes in the law.
- Explore means to make business regulation smoother and more efficient, modify the Business and Occupations tax and establish tax increment financing to spur business development.
- Focus on new ways to support small business, in part by better utilizing micro-financing programs and by securing new financial resources for such programs.

DRAFT